

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

Pat Donovan
Rm 544

18 FEB 1993

MM Dock. 92-266

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8310-MEA
CN9300563

RECEIVED

MAR 22 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable Howell Heflin
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heflin:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of several constituents who complain that cable television rates have increased in advance of the implementation of the Cable Act of 1992.

The Commission has a clear understanding that Congress adopted the Cable Act of 1992 to constrain unreasonable cable rates. The Commission is in the process of formulating rules implementing the rate provisions of the law and is seeking public comment on those provisions that address rate rollbacks, refunds, and evasions of statutory requirements. The Commission will attempt to implement these provisions faithfully, and will consider the conduct of the cable industry during the interim period in deciding what kind of regulation is needed.

Your constituents' letters will be placed in the record of this proceeding so that the Commission can be mindful of their concerns during its deliberations. I trust that the foregoing and the enclosures are informative.

Sincerely,

Roy J. Stewart

Roy J. Stewart
Chief, Mass Media Bureau

Enclosures

No. of Copies rec'd
UNAB CDE

1 copy

Congressional

CONGRESSIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES CENTER

HOWELL HEFLIN
ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

□ 728 SENATE HART BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0101
(202) 224-4124

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0101

STATE OFFICES:

□ 355 FEDERAL BUILDING
1800 FIFTH AVENUE NORTH
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35203
(205) 731-1500

□ 113 ST. JOSEPH STREET
437 U.S. COURTHOUSE
MOBILE, AL 36602
(205) 432-7715

□ FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, 8-29
15 LEE STREET
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
(205) 265-9507

□ 105 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 228
TUSCUMBIA, AL 35674
(205) 381-7060

*MRB
CAT V - letter
903*

February 10, 1993

Office of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sir:

I have enclosed letters from some of my constituents who are upset about cable rate increases since the passage of the Cable Consumer Protection Act. I thought that you might want copies for your public complaint file.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Howell Heflin
Howell Heflin

HH/th

January 11, 1993

J. Sloan, General Manager
Better Vision Cable Company
P.O. Box 900
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

RECEIVED SENATOR HEPBURN
JAN 13 1993

Mr. Sloan:

I am in receipt of your letter, not dated, advising me of your latest rate increase.

Only a year or so ago, Better Vision Cable Company almost doubled the cost of just basic service and now Better Vision has increased my rate from \$18.85 to \$19.60.

My question is, how do you people justify almost doubling the rate a short time ago and now come along and increase the rate again?

Your transmission has not improved that much with your so called "system improvements" and your "customer service enhancements" because that is a joke as I can't get a "warm body" on the telephone when your so called "system improvements" fail to function so I can get a decent picture on my television. There are other stations trying to come in on the same channel, "snow" and other interruptions.

Also, Better Vision has moved channel 2-Atlanta- to channel 9, where the Columbus, Ga. channel was and on channel 2 now you have "Xpress Info" of which I do not want because Better Vision is charging me for a channel that I am not receiving...channel 9 out of Columbus, Ga..

I need that "Express Info" channel like I need a sore toe.

If I called every time that Better Vision's transmission "messed up" I'd be calling almost every day.

Would you like to know about some cases and points?

Probably not, but I'll tell you anyway.

1. Snow and lines across the screen during the national conventions on channel 7.
2. Many other times Better Vision's transmission was "messed up" between the conventions in November and December.
3. Just recently on December 29, channel 7 had "snow" from 7pm to 7:45pm and on channel 13 had lines across the screen and the picture was indistinguishable.
4. On January 5, 1993, channel 7, on the program "Nova" and on the program "Health Quarterly" there was "snow" through-out these two programs.

These are only a few and I did call Better Vision's office and I also called William Boyd to see if he could help with the problem.

Like I said before, if I called every time that I had reception problems, I would be calling almost every day. I should not have to do this.

Mr. Sloan, I cannot understand why Better Vision cannot furnish their subscribers with a service that is decent... the subscribers are surely paying for it but we are not getting our money's worth.

All I have to say is, I can't understand how you, in good conscience, could write a letter like you did and expect people to believe it, except for the increase in the rate... we can believe that.

I could care less about getting the two "new" channels... cartoon network and sci-fi channels... all I want is a decent picture and sound on all of the channels that I do get, of which I pay dearly for.

I will tell you this, as of January 11, 1993, I will be keeping a "log" book on your transmissions from 5pm until 11pm daily and I will have this "log " book real handy when I deduct a portion from my next bill that I get from you. The "log" book that I will keep will be notarized on a regular basis.

I know that I do have an option to subscribe or not to subscribe to cable television..."a half of a loaf is better than none at all" considering the faults of an outside antenna; however, your transmission can stand a lot of "enhancement" along with your customer service.

I would enjoy sharing some enthusiasm in this new year if Better Vision Cable would transmit quality reception and you should definitely renew Better Vision's commitment to us by furnishing their customers with the best quality transmission and service as this is the least your company can do since your company is charging an arm and leg for them.

If you want to discuss this letter or any part of it, you can come to see me at my house as I am tired of calling and calling Better Vision's office when it should not be necessary to do so as often as I do...it is getting to be a joke.

Regards,

Eugene F. Blankenship
Eugene F. Blankenship
Route 1, Box 55-A
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

P.S.

I do hope that I will get a response from some or all of these folks that I am sending a copy of this letter... any help would appreciated to help put a stop to this rate gouging and get Better Vision to supply quality transmission and service like they are obligated to do.

CC/ENC.

James Cable Partners, Bloomfield Hill, Michigan
Congressman Glen Browder, Washington, D.C.
Senator Heflin, Washington, D.C.
Senator Shelby, Washington, D.C.
City Council Members, Roanoke, Alabama
City Clerk, Roanoke, Alabama
Mrs. Judy Stone, Executive Director, Alabama Public Television
Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., Director
Consumer Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.
Consumer Protection Agency, State of Alabama
Better Business Bureau, Washington, D.C.
Better Business Bureau, Roanoke, Alabama

(Any of you folks "game" to "get your feet wet" with this?)

EFB

Better Vision Cable

P.O. Box 900
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

(205) 863-8112
1-800-239-5367

Dear Valued Customer,

As the General Manager of BetterVision Cable, I'd like to welcome you to an exciting new year of Cable Television! I'm looking forward to 1993 with confidence that it is going to be one of our best years yet! We're going to bring you more terrific programming and tremendous entertainment value.

As a result of system improvements, customer service enhancements and increased operational expenses such as postage, insurance, labor, utilities and most importantly programming, the following rates will apply effective January 1, 1993:

Basic Service (Channels 2-13)	\$19.60
Value Package (Channels 19-41)	4.15
Additional Outlet	3.50
Manual Converter	3.00
Remote Converter	4.00
HBO Premium Service	11.95
Cinemax Premium Service	9.95
The Disney Channel Premium Service	8.00

But be assured, even with this modest increase, cable television service will continue to be your best entertainment value. Please see the enclosed new channel line-up and rate card and keep it handy for future reference.

We at BetterVision are always striving to bring you the best in entertainment and educational programming. Effective January 1, 1993 all subscribers to Basic and Value Package will receive the new CARTOON NETWORK on channel 39 and SCI-FI CHANNEL on channel 41.

With the addition of the CARTOON NETWORK you will receive cartoon favorites from the Hanna-Barbera, MGM and Pre-1950 Warner Bros. libraries. We'll have some of the best cartoon characters on the air like Bugs Bunny, Popeye, The Flintstones, Yogi Bear and Tom & Jerry, just to name a few.

The SCI-FI CHANNEL brings you some of the greatest programming ever like E.T., Star Wars, Return of the Jedi, Batman, Home Alone, Ghostbusters and Terminator 2. With the SCI-FI CHANNEL you get a broad, but unique, identity, not only Science Fiction, but also Science Fact, Fantasy, Classic Serials, Animation and Horror.

As we previously reported to you, Congress recently adopted legislation which extends regulation over cable television rates, but provides us with no standards or guidance. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is expected to adopt guidelines and rules in a few months. This rate adjustment is in full compliance with the present law and Congress' instructions. When the FCC makes its guidelines known and effective, we will then make adjustments to our rates, if adjustments are required to meet those new standards.

I sincerely hope that you share our enthusiasm for the up-coming year as we renew our commitment to you — our customer. In 1993, we're going to give you the greatest entertainment, value and variety ever! Thanks for letting us serve you.

Sincerely,



Jim Sloan
General Manager

ABLE CHANNEL	STATION	NETWORK	LOCATION
2	LOCAL CHANNEL		
3	WTTO (21)	IND	BIRMINGHAM
4	WTBS (17)	IND	ATLANTA
5	WAGA (5)	CBS	ATLANTA
6	WBRC (6)	ABC	BIRMINGHAM
7	WCIQ (7)	PBS	CHEAHA
8	WGN (9)	IND	CHICAGO
9	WSB (2)	ABC	ATLANTA
10	WJSU (40)	CBS	ANNISTON
11	WGNX (46)	IND	ATLANTA
12	WSFA (12)	NBC	MONTGOMERY
13	WVTM (13)	NBC	BIRMINGHAM
14	HBO		
15	AMERICAN MOVIE CLASSICS		
16	CINEMAX		
17	ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION		
18	DISNEY		
19	NICKELODEON		
20	USA		
21	VH-1		
22	THE LEARNING CHANNEL		
23	ESPN		
24	CNN		
25	THE NASHVILLE NETWORK		
26	COUNTRY MUSIC TV		
27	HEADLINE NEWS		
28	TNT		
29	DISCOVERY		
30	ACTS		
31	LIFETIME		
32	MTV		
33	THE FAMILY CHANNEL		
34	THE WEATHER CHANNEL		
35	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT		
36	QVC		
37	BET		
38	C-SPAN		
39	CARTOON NETWORK		
40	TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK		
41	SCI-FI CHANNEL		

Better Vision Cable

707 North Main Street
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

OFFICE OPEN 8:00 A.M. UNTIL 5:00 P.M. MONDAY-FRIDAY
CLOSED ON SATURDAY

PHONE 863-8112

1-800-239-5367

BASIC - CHNS 2-13	\$19.60
VALUE PACKAGE - CHNS 19-41	4.15
ADDITIONAL OUTLET	3.50
MAN. CONVERTER	3.00
REMOTE CONVERTER	4.00
PREMIUM SERVICES	
HBO	11.95
CINEMAX	9.95
DISNEY	8.00
STANDARD INSTALLATION FEES	
INSTALL (NEW WIRE)	50.00
INSTALL (PRE-WIRED)	30.00
RECONNECT	25.00
RELOCATE OUTLET	20.00
ADD OUTLET	20.00
INSTALL PAY	15.00

*PREMIUM SERVICE

Subscribing to either HBO, Cinemax or Disney will also give you Channels 15 and 17 FREE

Jan 11, 1993

Honorable Senator Harrell Heflin

Dear Sir

I heard a lot about T.V. Cable Service during the last Congress. I wonder if any thing has ~~been~~ changed. My reason for asking my bill from Comcast has jumped quite a bit

Jan 91 - Was 15⁵⁵
Jan 92 19⁰⁵ Jan 93 20⁸⁰ I'm a Charter member. Witch is a bit smaller.

in the last year I believe that figures 970 -

It seems to me Competition should be allowed to come in or they should come under Public Service Commission. The last 2 years they have had a 33% raise.

Allen Loveface
1125 Bellemade Ave
Florence Ala.



MAILED 40CT

Senator Howell Heflin
Senate Office Building
Washington D.C.

HOWELL HEFLIN
ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

☐ 728 SENATE HART BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0101
(202) 224-4124

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0101

STATE OFFICES:

- ☐ 355 FEDERAL BUILDING
1800 FIFTH AVENUE NORTH
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35203
(205) 731-1500
- ☐ 113 ST. JOSEPH STREET
437 U.S. COURTHOUSE
MOBILE, AL 36602
(205) 432-7715
- ☐ FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, B-29
15 LEE STREET
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
(205) 265-9507
- ☐ 105 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 228
TUSCUMBIA, AL 35674
(205) 381-7060

To: Washington Office

From: Birmingham office

Date: 1-12-02

53-10000-10000
1-12-02
P.L.D.
SENATOR HEFLIN

JAN 14 REC'D

January 11, 1992

Mr. Howell Heflin
113 St. Joseph St.
Mobile, Al. 36603

Ref: Cable TV Rates

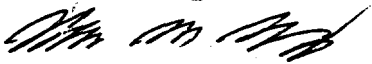
Dear Mr. Heflin:

I do not normally take the time to write about small trivial matters to a person of your position, but I make an exception this time. I received my New Years present from my local cable TV company which as you can see was an increase in my rates for basic and expanded.

I am greatly troubled that I now pay \$19.55 per month for 29 basic channels and roughly \$12.00 for each expanded channel, which are the only good ones. In Atlanta they only pay \$12.95 for 63 channels. It puzzles me that the United States House and Senate do not have better things to do than regulating the cable TV industry.

I would like to get your input on why regulating this industry was so important and also the possibility of repealing this law. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Brey
176 Lakeview Loop
Daphne, Al. 36526

1992 JAN 21 PM 3:21
HOWELL HEFLIN

Important Rate Information

**YOUR 1993 CABLE TV MONTHLY RATE
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1
WILL BE**

Basic Cable is \$19.55, an increase of \$0.67

*Applicable franchise
fees and taxes will
apply.*

Prices for Other Services

HBO - \$12.35

Showtime - \$12.20

The Movie Channel - \$12.20

Disney - \$10.20

Encore - \$1.50

Additional Outlet - \$2.50

Converter W/Remote - \$4.00

The Cable Guide - \$1.00

Expanded Basic - \$2.67

Digital Music Express - \$9.95

*** Reduced Rates are Available for Multiple Premium Services ***

**Storer Cable
Communications, Inc.**

**Customer Service
928-0235**

Pricing, programming and packages are subject to change.

Cable's Still A Great Buy.

Cable television is one of the best entertainment values your money can buy.

As a valued customer, we want to inform you of some changes to your cable service. In 1992, our costs for programming, technology, and general operating expenses have risen more than the increase in the cost of living. In 1993, we are adjusting our rates by the regional cost of living index, plus cost increases from program suppliers. This will enable us to continue bringing you the quality service and entertainment you value.

As you may know, Congress recently adopted legislation which extends greater regulation over cable television rates. The Federal Communications Commission is expected to adopt rate regulation guidelines and rules by mid 1993. Based on current information, we believe the rate adjustments we are taking are consistent with the provisions of the new law.

We regret we cannot yet answer all your questions on the new legislation until the FCC acts. We are committed to complying with the new rules — and doing all we can to make cable television programming and service even better.

Please refer to the back panel for the new rates and their effective date.

Notice to Customers

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued its new technical standards in 1992, it adopted regulations which require all cable television operators to establish a process for resolving complaints from customers about the quality of the television signals delivered and to notify customers of those procedures.

We are dedicated to providing quality cable television service to our customers and to assuring that each problem is immediately resolved to the customer's satisfaction. These customer service procedures, in addition to many other issues, are covered in material provided to you at the time of installation and generally annually after you've become a customer.

This notice summarizes some of the procedures that you need to know to help us resolve complaints you may have about the quality of the television signals delivered:

1. Our business office is open weekdays, except holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Mon., Tues., Thur., and Fri. and from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

City Clerk
City of Fairhope
P.O. Box 429
Fairhope, AL 36533

City Manager
City of Daphne
P.O. Box 400
Daphne, AL 36256

City Clerk
City of Bay Minnette
P.O. Box 1208
Bay Minnette, AL 36507

Baldwin County Comm.
P.O. Box 1488
Bay Minnette, AL 36507

We urge that you call us anytime you have questions or concerns about your service, VCR hook-up questions or problems, or any other aspect of the cable television service which we take pride in providing to you.